

REMARKS

Claims 9-18 have been cancelled without disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein or prejudice to Applicants' right to file any continuing applications directed thereto. Claim 4 has been amended to correct an informality. Claims 19-24 have been added. Support for claims 19-24 may be found throughout the specification. No new matter has been added.

In the Office Action dated October 3, 2005, claims 1-5 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Hirayanagi (U.S. Patent No. 5,847,813). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites a carrier constructed to carry a lithographic substrate or a lithographic patterning device. The carrier includes a first member provided with an open hollow structure that is open to at least one side of the first member. The first member is constructed to support a lithographic substrate or a lithographic patterning device. The carrier also includes a second member connected to the first member, such that a closed hollow internal structure is formed between the first and second members. Hirayangi does not disclose or suggest all of the features of claim 1.

Hirayanagi discloses a mask holder (20) for holding a mask (10). (Hirayanagi at col. 2, Ins. 27-30; FIG. 1.) The mask holder (20) includes an outer frame (22) and an inner frame (24) that support the mask (10). (Hirayanagi at col. 2, Ins. 51-57; FIG. 1.) The outer frame (22) and inner frame (24) define multiple voids (26). (Hirayanagi at col. 2, Ins. 52-53; FIG. 1.) The voids (26) extend through the mask holder (20) so that an exposure beam (21) and an alignment beam may pass through the mask (10) and the voids (26). (Hirayanagi at col. 2, ln. 66 – col. 3, ln. 3; FIG. 2.) The outer frame (22) of the mask holder (20) of Hirayanagi does not include a “bottom” but is instead a frame that defines the periphery of the mask holder (20). (See Hirayanagi at FIG. 2.) Thus, the structure formed by the outer (22) and inner (24) frames is open on two sides.

In contrast, claim 1 recites that the carrier includes “a second member connected to said first member, such that a closed hollow internal structure is formed between said first and second members.” (Emphasis added.) Hirayanagi simply doesn’t disclose or suggest a carrier that includes first and second members that form a closed hollow internal structure.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and the claims that depend from claim 1 are patentable over Hirayanagi, and respectfully request that the rejection to claims 1-5 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 8 recites a lithographic apparatus that includes, *inter alia*, a table constructed to hold a substrate or a patterning device. The table includes a carrier constructed to carry a lithographic substrate or a lithographic patterning device. The carrier includes “a first member provided with an open hollow structure that is open to at least one side of said first member, said first member constructed to support a lithographic substrate or a lithographic patterning device; and a second member connected to said first member, such that a closed hollow internal structure is formed between said first and second members.”

Hirayanagi is discussed above. Hirayanagi simply does not disclose or suggest a lithographic apparatus that includes a carrier that includes “a second member connected to said first member, such that a closed hollow internal structure is formed between said first and second members,” as recited by claim 8.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 and the new claims that depend from claim 8, namely claims 19-24, are patentable over Hirayanagi, and respectfully request that the rejection to claim 8 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 6 and 7 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicants acknowledge with appreciate that claims 6 and 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, in view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are allowable.

All rejections and objections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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